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Training and News for the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service

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# ACS Holds Winter Meeting

## Bill Dockstader W7LSK Honored

By Peter Smith N7BYP

The Seattle Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) held it's winter meeting on Saturday, February 7, at the Seattle Public Utilities Operations Center. The meeting began a little after nine o'clock and continued until around noon. Approximately thirty people attended.

Mark Sheppard (N7LYE) and Pete Smith (N7BYP) gave an update on the upcoming sixth annual Emergency Communications Academy which will be held March 21 and 22 at the Shoreline Conference Center. Many interesting and informative sessions are scheduled that will be of interest to ACS members. Keynote speaker will be Jerry Boyd (KW7J), current District 6 Emergency

Coordinator and consultant on public safety. Further information about the Communications Academy program and registration can be found at [www.commacademy.org](http://www.commacademy.org).

Steve Monsey (N0FPF) presented an update on packet radio and its uses for emergency com-

munications. He discussed typical 9600 baud systems and gave information on necessary hardware components. Software for Linux and Windows operating systems was also included in the presentation. Steve wrapped up his presentation by demonstrating how to send messages, including encrypted messages.

Don Moore (K7DEM) updated members on the status of the 146.96 repeater operated by the Puget Sound Repeater Group. A new receive site for the repeater will be set up at Lake Forest Park. The transmitter will remain at its present Queen Anne location.

Mark Sheppard noted that ACS members are invited to participate in planning for a new Emergency Operations Center

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*Photo by Peter Smith N7BYP*

Bill Dockstader W7LSK receives award from  
ACS Manager, Mark Sheppard N7LYE.

## QRV?

QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

*QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle  
Auxiliary Communication Service*

City of Seattle  
Emergency Management

**ACS Net & Disaster Coordination**  
Weekly Net, Mondays at 7:00 p.m.  
146.96 MHz

**ACS Primary Message Channels**  
441.80 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)  
443.00 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)  
443.65 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)

**ACS 6 Meter Frequency**  
53.250 MHz (tone 100 Hz)

**ACS Website**  
[www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs](http://www.cityofseattle.org/eoc/acs)

**State & County Nets**  
Washington State Emergency  
Mondays at 5:30 p.m.  
Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.  
3.985 MHz

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King County ARES  
Sundays at 8:00 p.m.  
146.82 MHz (tone 103.5)

Please direct inquiries about the  
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## From the Editor

### Punctuation Marks

I know what you're probably thinking. Punctuation marks? What's he thinking about? How are punctuation marks related to emergency radio or to ACS? Okay, last time I checked I hadn't lost my mind and there *is* a connection - a bit of a stretch I'll admit but hang in there and let me explain further.

The specific punctuation mark I have in mind is the ordinary comma. That's right, the comma! Commas are usually found in the middle of a long string of words. They separate thoughts expressed by those long strings of words. So you have something like this: words - comma - words = meaning. Just hold that thought for a moment now while I change the subject. I'll get back to commas, believe me!

Our upcoming Communications Academy offers a unique, once a year opportunity to update communications, organization, and technical skills. At the same time it allows us to have those all-important eyeball qso's with our friends and colleagues in ACS and other emergency communications organizations. You can find more information about the Academy by going to its website: [www.commacademy.org](http://www.commacademy.org).

Whenever I see the Academy **w e b a d d r e s s** ([www.commacademy.org](http://www.commacademy.org)), I see it *not* as comm-academy, but as *comma-cademy*.

Don't ask me why, I don't

## From the EOC

By Jim Mullen, Director  
Seattle Emergency  
Management

By the time you read this, it will have been about a year since I returned from Sri Lanka and addressed ACS. Much has happened - TOPOFF came and went (we've discussed that). The people of Seattle voted for a levy that included funding for a new Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The new EOC is an opportunity to provide the community with a modern, well-equipped command and control center for the Mayor and key city responders. I don't have to tell anyone who has been in the current EOC of the need for a larger, more efficient structure. Many people are working very hard on a very fast track to design and build the new center. The needs of all relevant agencies will be included, and ACS issues will be addressed along with all of the others.

Your efforts over the years have resulted in a clear recognition of the importance of ACS to the community. I'll admit that in prior years reports of your activities caused some raised eyebrows in some quarters (not here, I assure you). There were those who wondered, sometimes aloud, if we weren't overdoing it a bit with the alternate communications planning we were doing. Well, no more. And so I fully expect that the EOC Communications team's needs will receive significant attention. You have been that valuable, and people know it.

## A Tower Party!

By Tom Croteau WA9ZSK

*(Editor's note: I received the following communication and photos from Tom Croteau (WA9ZSK). Tom gave his permission to pass it along to all of you)*

Here we are at a tower party at our VHF repeater that serves the Seattle area for RACES, ARES and ACS emergency communications. This site is the main control site and a remote receive site with UHF receive from another remote VHF receive site and links via UHF to our remote transmit site on Queen Anne Hill overlooking downtown, and is also the backup transmit site with battery backup and phone patch.

I'm the apprentice on the right learning from Jim W7BDL a retired 33yr AT&T Microwave tower site maintenance engineer and excellent tutor! Yes Greg I actually used a safety belt this time but lost my hard hat on my way up the tower. The indispensable ground crew played a critical role and were all wearing hard hats and no one got hurt. This was a safer operation than the 200 foot tower in Elk River Minnesota in my more daring and reckless days without a safety belt, ladder rungs bent and missing and losing a Motorola HT belonging to (AE0X) now W0CE, on the way up the tower instead of a hard hat. And that HT220 still worked! I wonder if a hard hat could have survived the fall!



*Photos by Will KD7WHQ and side kick Rusti.*

# ACS Emergency Net Control Script

March 2004

Run twice—First for emergency traffic only

Good (morning/evening) this is (your name, your call sign) emergency net control for the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service (ACS) radio net.

This station will act as net control until the EOC is activated. (TO BE REPEATED THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPT)

Is there any emergency or priority traffic for the net? (TO BE REPEATED THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPT)

W7ACS, Seattle EOC, are you ready to take over net operations? (*If no response, or no for net control, continue with script.*)

This is (call sign), my name is (name). I am located in (location).

Membership stations when you respond please give your call, name, and assignment and monitoring capability. If you do not have an assignment please give your location. I will now take membership station check-ins with suffixes

A-M, N-Z

Who is available to go to their assigned community center?

***Or***

(Call) are you able to report to your assigned Community Center?

Are there any non-member stations wishing to check in to the net, please come now with your call, name, and location.

## After Emergency

Seattle ACS would like to thank the Puget Sound Repeater Group for the use of this frequency during this emergency.

**Meeting**, from Page 1

that will be built in the near future. He will be assembling a design team of ACS members to advise on the design of a new communications center at the Seattle Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Mark also discussed ACS member callout possibilities. They include:

- \* conventional pagers
- \* radio voice pagers using a 2 tone system. This involves use of surplus fire department pagers.
- \* DTMF paging using members hand held radios.
- \* notification via wireless phones and pagers.

Problems associated with conventional pagers, radio voice pagers, and DTMF systems were discussed. A major problem involves asset management issues. It will be difficult to assure that those paging alternatives will have fresh batteries, will be properly programmed, and will be worn by ACS members. Because many ACS members already possess and use cell phones on a regular basis, notification via cell phones presents an alternative that does not have significant asset management issues. Mark will continue to explore callout alternatives and report back at a future date.

Bill Ehler (K7NZV) presented a draft for a new emergency net control script. In subsequent discussion, members noted that there is a need for systematic handling emergency messages at the early stages of

emergencies as well as a need for efficiently forwarding messages taken to net control when it eventually is established at the emergency operations center.

In further discussion the value of developing different activities to accompany the weekly nets was noted. Check ins on differing frequencies, message practice, and check ins from assigned locations were suggested.

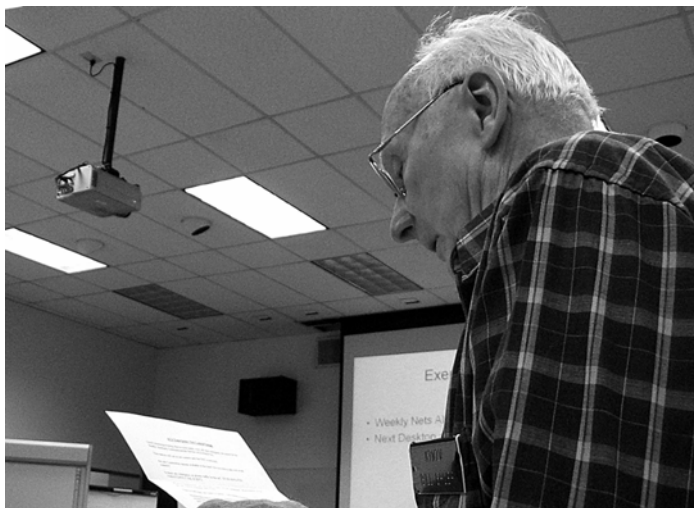
Drills planned for the next few months include two city-wide exercises involving a massive power outage and large-scale water disruptions. More information on these as well as ACS participation will be given at a later time. In addition, a drill will be held in

ning session, will be scheduled for March; the other to be held on a Saturday will be scheduled for March or April. Specific times will be announced. Teams of operators for the EOC will be identified as well as team leaders for those teams. We will start by identifying three team leaders.

A technical manager for the equipment at the EOC is needed. Mark called for volunteers for this post. The technical manager won't need to have technical skills as city technicians will take care of repairs and construction of new equipment and antennas. The technical manager will be involved more in the coordination of frequencies and management of equipment.

The meeting ended with special recognition for Bill Dockstader (W7LSK) who is retiring from his post as deputy RACES officer for ACS. Bill is stepping down because of health issues but will continue to remain active within ACS. Mark Sheppard (N7LYE), Paul Beringer (NG7Z), and Pete Smith (N7BYP) led in a tribute to Bill's excellent service to the organization.

Everyone present expressed appreciation for Bill's fine service to ACS. Mark Sheppard presented Bill with a well-deserved certificate of achievement. Afterwards everyone enjoyed a delicious cake decorated to celebrate Bill's leadership and dedication to ACS.



*Photo by Peter Smith N7BYP*

**Bill Ehler K7NZV reads new net script**

September for ACS members. Members were encouraged to get involved in planning for the September drill. Finally, several members expressed interest in participating in Field Day. There is a need to form a planning committee for the 2004 Field Day.

Two EOC orientation activities are being planned. One, an eve-

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**EOC, from Page 2**

One person who has contributed mightily to that reputation, Bill Dockstader, is in my mind as I write this. Bill was honored recently by Chief Kerlikowske for his dedication to the development of the amateur radio capability of the City of Seattle. It was well-deserved, and I was proud to be on hand to see Bill accept this long overdue recognition. I can't help but believe that in the future, Bill will find a way to serve his community in some way. As he steps back from his duties as Deputy RACES Coordinator, we are the poorer for it. And we in Emergency Management will never be able to repay Bill for his

technical skill, steady, professional demeanor, and his good humor and optimism when he is deployed to our EOC. He'll be missed, and we welcome his continued service in any capacity that he chooses. — — — — —

**Editor, from Page 2**

know either. That's just the crazy oddball way I see it. On the other hand, perhaps it's not so strange after all. Let's see, "comma-cademy." How is our Communications Academy like a comma? Well, as noted above, commas separate and give meaning to that which *precedes* and *follows* the comma. It combines separate parts and makes them whole in

terms of their meaning.

Think of our ACS service, week in and week out through a year as words in a sentence. Along comes the Academy. It *punctuates* those weeks through a pause that serves to unify and make sense of them. Hence, comma-cademy!

Okay, I suppose my comma-cademy notion *is* a stretch, yet for me it does capture some of the essence of the Academy. After all, it's our once a year chance to put things into perspective, to look back over we've accomplished, to look ahead to new challenges, and to see our mission as a unified whole.

Comma-cademy? It's great. Don't miss it! — — — — —

**QRV? - Seattle ACS**

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